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General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-second year

Identical letters dated 4 December 2007 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

The humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip, is in a constant state of deterioration, as Israel, the occupying Power, continues to commit grave breaches of its responsibilities and obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. While the rhetoric of the occupying Power has taken on a deceivingly more positive tone, since our last letter, dated 26 October 2007, the actual situation on the ground has deteriorated further as a result of its unlawful policies and practices.

The recent international show of support and commitment to peace in the Middle East has been gaining momentum, as reflected in the convening of the international conference at Annapolis, Maryland, on 27 November 2007. Unfortunately, however, Israel, the occupying Power, has responded to the international goodwill by continuing to take actions on the ground against the Palestinian people, violating their basic human rights and indicating that its intentions are contrary to its peace rhetoric.

In flagrant violation of international law, following its declaration of the Gaza Strip as an "enemy entity" in September 2007, the occupying Power continues to take measures to intensify its siege of the Gaza Strip and to collectively punish the entire Palestinian civilian population there. Israel has persisted in its closure of border crossings into and out of the Gaza Strip, obstructing the access and movement of people and goods, including humanitarian, food, medical and building supplies. Moreover, Israel has followed through with its threats to cut fuel supplies to the Gaza Strip, and, as a result, more than 70 per cent of the fuel stations in Gaza have shut down due to lack of fuel and 50 per cent of cars have stopped running, with serious consequences for the living conditions of the civilian population.

It is very disturbing that the Israeli Supreme Court has actually ruled that Israel can limit fuel supplies to Gaza as a means of pressure. It is also disturbing that it is considering a similar plan to cut electricity supply, and has requested the

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State to submit a detailed plan on the matter. In the meantime, it is blocking the plan. The decision by the Court to permit the State to carry out such inhumane punitive measures is completely contrary to international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, unjust and morally unacceptable. Such decisions and measures by Israel, the occupying Power, should be rejected and condemned by the international community, and Israel should be called upon immediately to comply with all of its legal obligations under international law, including to the Palestinian civilian population under its occupation in the Gaza Strip.

Overall, the continuing siege, the reduction of fuel supplies and threats of complete cessation of fuel delivery from Israel, the only source from which the Palestinian people are able to receive fuel, is having and will have an extremely detrimental impact on numerous sectors, including health care, sanitation and environmental services, transportation, education, commerce, industrial production, agriculture and, of course, the daily home life of the Palestinian civilian population. It is necessary to refer to the fact that the siege of Gaza has resulted in the closure of over 75 per cent of industries in the Gaza Strip, adding at least 120,000 Gaza residents to the list of the unemployed. Every sector of the economy is suffering as the occupying Power has decided to allow the population in Gaza access only to what it deems "basic goods", which, as recent reports indicate, does not include almost half of the usual food products Gaza used to import. Not on the list of basic goods that Palestinians are entitled to are dairy products, baby food, winter clothes, and many other goods that in any modern society would be taken for granted.

At the same time, Palestinian patients and the entire medical sector in the Gaza Strip have suffered immeasurably and at times irreversibly because of this policy of starvation and humiliation. Hospitals report severe shortages of vital medical supplies, some in zero supply. This unacceptable situation has forced hospitals to conduct only medically urgent surgeries. Dialysis patients and other patients who require constant care are suffering from the domino effect of the overall situation in Gaza, where power cuts and fuel shortages have made reaching the dialysis wards a daunting task and have affected the hours of their operation and services. These patients and many who remain waiting are being denied their basic right to life-saving medical treatment as a result of a morally repugnant act that contravenes international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

Clearly, the continuation of such illegal measures by the occupying Power will only cause further deterioration of the prevailing grave humanitarian situation, with both short and long-term negative consequences for the civilian population, the stability of the area and the prospects for peace.

Israel also continues to pursue its illegal colonization activities in the West Bank via its illegal construction of settlements and the wall. Today, the Israeli Ministry of Housing announced its intention to build an additional 307 housing units in the illegal Israeli settlement of Har Homa, built in the occupied East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Jabal Abu Ghneim, in complete defiance of international law, United Nations resolutions and its commitments under the framework of the peace process, including under the Quartet road map, most recently reaffirmed at Annapolis on 27 November 2007.

Moreover, in the past month, Israeli occupying forces have killed at least 31 Palestinians in various acts of violence, including extrajudicial executions,

military incursions and air strikes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In the West Bank, the occupying forces continue to routinely conduct raids into Palestinian cities, towns and villages, undermining the Palestinian Authority and its efforts to enforce the rule of law. In Gaza, an additional 29 Palestinians have also paid with their precious lives because of the draconian and illegal Israeli policy of siege against Gaza, as those patients died while awaiting the "security permission" of the occupying Power to have access to medical treatment not available in isolated and impoverished Gaza.

Over the past seven years, Israel, the occupying Power, has used a number of pretexts to justify its use of such illegal policies against the Palestinian civilian population, including the illegal policies of extrajudicial execution and strangulating siege. However, in the past six months, Israel's intensifying and crippling siege of the Gaza Strip has overstepped all boundaries and violated all norms and principles of international law, with devastating consequences unjustified under any pretext the occupying Power may think of using. These Israeli practices are quickly turning the entire Gaza Strip and its 1.5 million residents into a population completely dependant on handouts and aid for its very survival. The humanitarian situation is on the brink of collapse, and it is no longer acceptable or excusable for the international community to stand by and allow this reprehensible violation of international law and human rights to continue.

The international community, including the Security Council, bears clear responsibilities in this regard. Moreover, the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention bear additional responsibility to uphold and ensure respect for the Convention in all circumstances, and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, should be no exception.

In closing, I wish to reiterate that the recent gained momentum in peace efforts and talks on the Palestinian-Israeli track does not absolve the occupying Power from the obligation to respect international law and does not offer Israel a free human rights violation pass; nor does it preclude the moral and legal obligations of the international community to continue monitoring the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to call for Israel to respect and comply with all of its obligations under international law. Such compliance and respect, in tandem with progress made in resumed direct bilateral negotiations, are what will truly bring about a change in the situation on the ground and in the lives of the people and what will truly advance the peace process.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 300 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 26 October 2007 (A/ES-10/404-S/2007/634), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

In follow-up to the above-mentioned letters, it is my deep regret to inform you that at least 52 more Palestinian civilians, including children, have been killed by the Israeli occupying forces, raising the total number of martyrs killed since

September 2000 to 4,783. (The names of the martyrs who have been identified are listed in the annex to the present letter.)

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer

Annex to the identical letters dated 4 December 2007 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Names of martyrs killed by the Israeli occupying forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem* (Monday, 29 October, to Tuesday, 4 December 2007)

Monday, 29 October 2007

1. Farid Ibrahim Abu Odeh
2. Mohammad Youssef Hamad
3. Ahmad Ibrahim Abu Tahoon

Tuesday, 30 October 2007

4. Bilal Abu Awwad
5. Maher Abu Tair
6. Mahmoud Radwan
7. Ismail Qdaih

Wednesday, 31 October 2007

8. Mahmoud Faek al-Hajj

Thursday, 1 November 2007

9. Mohammad Harbi Siyam

Sunday, 4 November 2007

10. Zaher Suleiman al-Err
11. Ashraf Zaher al-Err
12. Mohammad Abu Harbeed
13. Hasem Khaddourah

Saturday, 10 November 2007

14. Jihad Nasser al-Nabaheen (16)
15. Bilal Ahmad al-Nabaheen (17)

Thursday, 15 November 2007

16. A'ed al-Bayari
17. Mohammad al-Qishawi
18. Mohammad Shabat

* The total number of Palestinian martyrs killed by the Israeli occupying forces since 28 September 2000 is 4,783.

Tuesday, 20 November 2007

19. Jivara Ahmad Saleh
20. Ahmad Ali Abu Sitta
21. Mohammad Zaki al-Najjar

Thursday, 22 November 2007

22. Salem Ahmad Abu Si'da
23. Nidal al-Najjar

Saturday, 24 November 2007

24. Talal Salama Abu Shghaiba
25. Ra'fat Salama Abu Shghaiba

Sunday, 25 November 2007

26. Alaa' Al-Zra'ei
27. Youssef Hussain Moussa (19)
28. Mohammad Zaki Qawzah

Monday, 26 November 2007

29. Mos'ab Abdelkareem al-Jaa'beer
30. Abdel Hadi Abu al-Jibeen
31. Anas al-Eila
32. Fadi Abdel Sattar Assaf

Tuesday, 27 November 2007

33. Ali al-Soufi

Wednesday, 28 November 2007

34. Rami Abu al-Roos
35. Essam Sa'di Hamdan

Thursday, 29 November 2007

36. Shaher Shaheen
37. Emad Abu Ta'eima
38. Abdallah al-Astal
39. Hani Abu Roumiya

Saturday, 1 December 2007

40. Ziyad Suleiman Abu Anza
41. Mohammad Suleiman Abu Anza
42. Ibrahim Assad Al-Buraim
43. Tamer Mahmoud Abu Jamei'
44. Jihad Fawzi Qodaih

Sunday, 2 December 2007

45. Bassam Al-Helou

Monday, 3 December 2007

46. Firas Qasqas
47. Islam Abdel Nabi
48. Aziz Sari
49. Mohammad Abu Mohadi

Tuesday, 4 December 2007

50. Abdel Rahman Abu Ghaza
51. Sameer al-Daqrn (18)
52. Suleiman al-Houli

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Security Council

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Report of the Secretary-General concerning the credentials of the alternate representative of the Russian Federation on the Security Council

Pursuant to rule 15 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Secretary-General wishes to report that he has received a note verbale dated 30 November 2007 from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations stating that Vladimir K. Safronkov has been appointed alternate representative of the Russian Federation on the Security Council.

In the opinion of the Secretary-General, this letter constitutes adequate provisional credentials.

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Security Council

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General Assembly
Sixty-second session
Agenda item 17
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Sixty-second year

Identical letters dated 5 December 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On the instructions of my Government, I transmit to you herewith a statistical summary of Israeli violations from 23 to 30 November 2007 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 17, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nawaf **Salam**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 5 December 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Subject: Israeli violations, acts of aggression and other activities from 23 to 30 November 2007, inclusive

Air violations

On 23 November 2007, between 1004 hours and 1300 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over the sea off al-Naqurah in a northerly direction as far as off the coast of Juniyah and circled over the sea off Juniyah and Beirut. It departed over the sea off al-Naqurah.

Between 1735 hours and 2050 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over the sea off al-Naqurah in a northerly direction as far as off the coast of Juniyah and circled over the sea off Beirut. It departed over the sea off al-Naqurah.

On 25 November 2007, between 1729 hours and 2100 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over the sea off Tyre in an easterly direction as far as Marj`ayun. It departed over Rumaysh.

At 2249 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over the sea off Tyre in an easterly direction as far as Marj`ayun. It departed on 26 December 2007 at 0100 hours over al-Naqurah.

On 26 November 2007, between 1220 hours and 1335 hours, two warplanes violated Lebanese airspace over the sea of Shikka in an easterly direction and circled over the sea off Shikka and Batrun. They departed over the sea off al-Naqurah.

On 27 November 2007, between 1010 hours and 1030 hours, enemy Israeli military aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over the Second Armoured Division sector at high altitude.

Between 1730 hours and 2040 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over Rumaysh and circled over the South region. It departed over al-Naqurah.

Between 1930 hours and 2200 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over `Alma al-Sha`b and circled over the South region. It departed over Rumaysh.

On 28 November 2007, between 1719 hours and 2020 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over the sea off Tyre in an easterly direction as far as Marj`ayun and circled over regions of the South. It departed over `Alma al-Sha`b.

At 2209 hours, an enemy Israeli aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over the sea off Tyre in an easterly direction as far as Marj`ayun and circled over regions of the South. It departed on 29 November 2007 at 0055 hours over Rumaysh.

On 29 November 2007, between 1705 hours and 1745 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over the sea off al-Naqurah in a northerly direction as far as off the coast of Beirut and circled over the sea off Beirut. It departed over the sea of al-Naqurah.

Sea violations

On 28 November 2007, at 1920 hours in the open sea off Ras al-Naqurah inside occupied Palestinian regional waters, an enemy Israeli military launch shone searchlights in the direction of a Lebanese fishing vessel located inside Lebanese regional waters.

Acts of aggression in the field

On 27 November 2007, at 0715 hours and intermittently thereafter, four cows belonging to the Israeli enemy crossed the Blue Line in the direction of Birkat al-Naqqar (outside the town of Shab'a). They departed on 28 November 2007 at 1200 hours.

On 28 November 2007, at 1200 hours, three cows belonging to the Israeli enemy crossed the Blue Line at pasture land in Kafr Shuba and attacked a pickup with three Lebanese citizens inside, leading to minor head injuries to one of the passengers and damage to the pickup. This occurred in the presence of the international Observation Group.

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Letter dated 5 December 2007 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that your letter dated 30 November 2007 (S/2007/695), concerning your intention to continue the activities of the United Nations support team to the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, with funding from the regular budget, has been brought to the attention of the Members of the Security Council. They take note of the information contained in your letter and the intention expressed therein. They also urge the members of the Mixed Commission to work with international donors to seek further voluntary contributions.

(*Signed*) Marcello **Spatafora**
President of the Security Council

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Security Council

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Report of the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste, 24 to 30 November 2007

I. Introduction

1. In his letter dated 31 October 2007 (S/2007/647), the President of the Security Council informed the Secretary-General that the members of the Council had decided to send a mission to Timor-Leste from 24 to 30 November 2007. The primary purpose of the mission, as set out in its terms of reference, was to reaffirm the commitment of the Security Council to assist the Timorese people to consolidate peace, democratic governance and the rule of law in the post electoral period in Timor-Leste, to express the Security Council's full support for the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), and to assess the progress made on the ground in the implementation of the mandate of UNMIT. The mission was also directed to discuss and exchange views with the Timorese authorities on ways and means to assist the country in developing capacities necessary to build on security and democratic and other gains achieved thus far. The full terms of reference and the composition of the mission are contained in the annex to the present report.

2. The mission left New York on 24 November and returned on 1 December. During the visit, the mission met with the President of Timor-Leste, José Ramos-Horta, the Prime Minister, Xanana Gusmão, the President of the National Parliament, the President of the Court of Appeal, Cabinet ministers, members of Parliament, leaders of political parties, civil society, the General Commander-designate of the national police, the Commander of the armed forces, the diplomatic community, UNMIT and the acting Commander of the international security force. The mission held separate meetings with the Bishops of Dili and Baucau. In addition, the mission visited the western district of Liquiça and the second-largest city in Timor-Leste, Baucau, located in the eastern part of the country, to meet with local officials, representatives of political parties and the UNMIT and national police commanders of each district.

II. Key concerns and issues

National reconciliation and democracy

3. The mission visited Timor-Leste following the first presidential and parliamentary elections since independence, held in April, May and June 2007, as the country is trying to slowly recover from the crisis of 2006. That crisis

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demonstrated that the differences among the political leaders of the country exacerbated the divisions at all levels of Timorese society, thus underlining the need for further efforts at national reconciliation and dialogue. While the elections of 2007 were held peacefully and were assessed as being free and fair by the Timorese and the international community, the violence that followed the announcement of the formation of the new Government in August 2007 (the Alliance for a Parliamentary Majority, which won 37 seats in Parliament, was invited to form the Government, not the former ruling party, Fretilin, which won 21 seats) was an indication of the fragility of the political situation and the need for further sustained efforts to build a truly democratic society.

4. President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão emphasized to the mission the determination of the State and Government to restore stability and normalcy, while reaffirming their commitment to democracy and the rule of law. The new Government had just taken office in August 2007, and the Prime Minister, while acknowledging that the country faced many challenges, said he believed that the Government could address the problems in the course of the next year or two. He placed particular importance on institutionalizing transparency, combating corruption and building a culture of democratic values. The elections were clearly a step forward for Timor-Leste in the consolidation of democracy. Since the new Parliament had started functioning, discussions on the Government's programme and the transitional budget were an encouraging exercise in constructive democratic debate. The Government demonstrated due respect for the Parliament as an independent organ of sovereignty, and parliamentary debate was generally constructive.

5. During a meeting with the mission, the Secretary-General of Fretilin and former Prime Minister, Mari Alkatiri, observed that the elections had brought new problems. He described the new Government as "unconstitutional" and "illegal" and said that it had "no legitimacy", as the party led by Xanana Gusmão had obtained only 24 per cent of the vote, while Fretilin had won 29 per cent, and the coalition headed by Mr. Gusmão, consisting of four parties that had received a combined total of over 51 per cent of the vote, had been formed only after the elections in order to obtain a majority of the seats in Parliament. Mr. Alkatiri said that if the coalition had existed before the elections and had contested the elections as a bloc and won, Fretilin would have accepted the results. He declared that new elections would have to be held no later than 2009, possibly by mid-2009. However, he expressed Fretilin's determination not to use violence to resolve differences, stressing that it would use "political means" to convince the President that new elections had to be held. Despite the concerns of Fretilin, the mission was informed by all interlocutors, including President Ramos-Horta, Mr. Alkatiri and representatives of UNMIT, that Fretilin attends parliamentary sessions and has participated actively in Parliament, including in committee and plenary discussions.

6. While considerable progress has been made in democratization, the mission noted that the root causes of the crisis of 2006 and its consequences have yet to be fully addressed. Underlying political tensions from the time of the crisis and the recent elections remain in segments of society at both the national and district levels, including pro- and anti-Fretilin support, east and west regional dynamics and divisions between the military and the police. In a statement delivered to the mission, a number of local non-governmental organizations observed that "East Timor is facing a crisis of identity" and that "These realities have arisen due to the

complicated and divided history of the East Timorese people over the last three generations and they present huge challenges to the process of nation-building and the overall development of the country". They appealed to the mission to support the Government in the creation of mechanisms for engaging civil society actors so that a common strategy can be developed and implemented to build national unity.

General security situation and security sector reform

7. After the violence in the eastern districts following the swearing-in of the new Government on 8 August, the overall security situation has improved throughout the country. There are continued minor sporadic disturbances in parts of Dili, and the situation continues to be fragile and volatile. There is concern that continuing problems stemming from the crisis (such as those relating to the fugitive Major Reinado, the "petitioners" (see below) and internally displaced persons) could have a negative impact on the security situation. Acknowledging the contribution made by UNMIT police to the improvement of the security situation, all Timorese interlocutors called for the continued presence of that police force and requested that it continue to assist the Government in maintaining security. Opposition parties represented in Parliament expressed the view that, because of the divisions within the political leadership and the lack of trust in Timorese security institutions, the people were still uncertain about the prospects for longer-term security and stability. All parties called on the United Nations to stay in the country, together with the international security force, while democratic structures are being built.

8. The mission was told that, in general, cooperation between the UNMIT police, who have a mandate for interim law enforcement, and the national police, with whom they are co-located, has been satisfactory, although there is room for improvement. Some Timorese civil society representatives in the districts voiced complaints to the mission about the high-handedness of some UNMIT police officers when dealing with, inter alia, incidents in the camps for internally displaced persons, in some of which women and children are the victims of violence. With regard to the institutional strengthening of the national police, the registration and certification programme is proceeding according to the Supplemental Arrangement on Policing. So far, 3,110 officers (97 per cent of the total strength) have been registered and have undergone screening. Of these, 1,274 have been provisionally certified and 186 fully certified. However, several police commanders voiced resentment, saying that, as the screening and mentoring process of the national police was taking a long time, officers were not able to perform operational duties and had to defer to the UNMIT police. They expressed the view that operational policing, especially in Dili, should involve the Timorese as soon as possible and expressed concern about being marginalized in the eyes of their own people. Notwithstanding those concerns, there was a clear desire on the part of the Timorese for international police to impart skills and expertise and provide more training, and it was suggested that additional dedicated United Nations police with training skills be deployed to the Mission.

9. The larger challenges in the security sector, which include the need to improve interaction between the security institutions, strengthen the legal framework, increase operational capabilities and enhance civilian oversight, are to be addressed in the context of the security sector reform process. Initial steps for the process started in December 2006, when the security sector review joint working group, co-chaired by senior representatives of the relevant ministries and UNMIT, was

established. The President has taken a lead role in the security sector review process, establishing a three-tier mechanism. He told the mission that under the previous minister the police force had been factionalized and that the Timorese would have to learn from the mistakes of the past. It would take time to develop a professional police force, and United Nations assistance would be needed. He also stressed that, until the problems of the two security institutions were addressed, there would continue to be serious problems, while acknowledging that he had tried to foster better relations between the institutions and that the relationship had indeed improved. The Secretary of State for Security and the Commander of the armed forces both pointed out that a national security policy had yet to be formulated, the Commander stating that there was a need for clarity on the role of the armed forces in the country. It is encouraging to note that in preparation for the comprehensive review of the security sector, on which UNMIT is mandated to assist the Government, work had recently started on drafting a national security policy, with the assistance of UNMIT.

10. The armed forces, which are dependent mainly on bilateral donors for their development, comprise 700 men and women since the dismissal of 594 soldiers in March 2006 in the wake of complaints of alleged discrimination within the force. The handling of the issue of those "petitioners" was an immediate trigger for the 2006 crisis. The position of the President and the Government is that the issue can be resolved through a combination of financial compensation and, for some, the chance of re-recruitment into the armed forces on a case-by-case basis. This is to be balanced with incentives for the force. The President informed the mission that that proposal had been accepted by the Commander of the armed forces, who had previously opposed any reintegration of the petitioners into the force.

Capacity-building

11. The Prime Minister identified one of the Government's main needs as capacity-building and indicated that it was reaching out to neighbouring countries to assist the Government in strengthening capacity in various areas. Major strides have been made since 2002 to build the capacity of the public service, but enormous challenges remain. During the crisis of 1999, as many as 8,000 civil servants, the majority of whom were Indonesian, fled the country. Restoring the appropriate level of strength, competence and experience will take a number of years. In addition to the limited pool of qualified personnel with core technical skills and knowledge, the public service in Timor-Leste is still crucially lacking clarity in its organizational structure, systems and work processes. Establishing a public service with systems and processes that are based on merit, competency and professionalism and which is non-political remains a challenge.

12. Like the four organs of sovereignty (the presidency, the Parliament, the courts and the executive), the justice sector is in need of continuing international assistance. The President of the Court of Appeal (the highest court in the land), who is an international judge of Timorese birth and ethnicity, expressed his appreciation to the mission for the expatriate judges, prosecutors and other judicial personnel provided by the United Nations and the international community, which, he said, had allowed the system to function and also allowed for national human resource training for the sector. He expressed the view that it would take many years before the country could build the necessary national resources. According to the President of the Court of Appeal, the scarcity of human resources had been exacerbated by the

2006 crisis, which had increased the caseload, as several sensitive cases had been investigated and some had gone to trial. He said the fragile institutional structure was the major challenge facing Timor-Leste and, coupled with limited capacity and lack of skills and training, it undermined the building of a culture of peaceful settlement of conflicts. He appealed for enhanced United Nations assistance for the justice sector. Similarly, the Deputy Prosecutor-General of Timor-Leste pointed out that, as there were only eight national and four international prosecutors, the prosecution service was understaffed and did not have the personnel it required to fulfil its mandate. As an example, he mentioned that both the Government and UNMIT had appealed to the international community to provide expertise to the legal system of Timor-Leste in investigating and prosecuting cases identified by the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry. It is encouraging to note that the new Government has indicated its intention to increase budgetary appropriations for the justice sector to ensure that it can undertake its functions.

Justice and the rule of law

13. The Independent Special Commission of Inquiry recommended in its report of October 2006 the prosecution of more than 60 individuals allegedly involved in criminal acts during the 2006 crisis. As a follow-up to the report, the Prosecutor-General has initiated 16 investigations in relation to criminal offences. Trials have been held in three cases and are pending in three other cases. Taking into account the serious resource constraints of the judicial sector as mentioned in paragraph 12 above, as well as the sensitive political environment, notable progress has been made in implementing the recommendations of the Commission. All Timorese interlocutors who met with the mission underlined the importance of justice and accountability in connection with the events of 2006, and emphasized the importance of investigating and trying those responsible on all sides in that conflict. In this regard, some opposition political parties appealed to the United Nations to expedite the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission, in particular the appointment of an international Deputy Prosecutor-General to ensure that prosecutions are free of political influence.

14. The fact that Major Alfredo Reinado, deserting military police commander, has evaded justice and continues to be at large after escaping from prison in August 2006 is being used by the Fretilin party against the current Government as an indication of Government bias, since the former Minister for the Interior and former Vice-President of Fretilin has been tried and convicted for his role in the 2006 crisis. President Ramos-Horta informed the mission that the Government had tried to apprehend Reinado by force in February but that the operation had resulted in the deaths of five people, while he had escaped capture. The President intimated that the Government was not intending to use force to capture Reinado as that would be "irresponsible", but conveyed his determination to ensure that he would face justice, even if it took 10 years. While the Government strategy is to negotiate with Reinado on facing justice, he, in turn, is attempting to further link his own situation with the petitioners issue. Fretilin members of Parliament, in particular, as well as several representatives of political parties and civil society, repeatedly expressed their concern to the mission that the Reinado case had not yet been resolved, a factor contributing to extant fears that the security situation is still fragile, with the potential for further violence in the future.

Situation of the internally displaced persons

15. There are still an estimated 100,000 internally displaced persons (30,000 in Dili; 70,000 in the districts), made up of Timorese who fled their homes as a result of the 2006 crisis either because their houses were burned down or because they feared for their own security or that of their families. Members of Parliament and representatives of political parties and civil society expressed their concern to the mission that the situation of the internally displaced persons had not yet been resolved. They viewed it as a threat to political and social stability and a serious humanitarian concern. The mission visited one of the four main camps for internally displaced persons in Dili, located adjacent to the national hospital, and spoke with displaced persons. Their main concern was their perception that, despite the presence of UNMIT police and the international security force in Dili, the security situation was not conducive to their leaving the camp and returning to their homes. They also expressed the view that there had been no progress in the justice process in the country.

16. It was clear to the mission that the main reasons why internally displaced persons do not leave the camps and return home are the lack of security and the lack of housing. There was a view among many of the Timorese interlocutors with whom the mission met that, until the cases of Major Reinado and the petitioners were resolved, the internally displaced persons would remain in the camps. While an enabling political and security environment would encourage them to return to their communities, it was also clear that longer-term efforts by the Government to rebuild or construct new housing for them would be needed.

Human rights

17. While the situation of the internally displaced persons poses a major challenge for the Government, the people of Timor-Leste generally enjoy a range of human rights, including freedom of speech, freedom to criticize the Government, freedom of assembly and freedom of religion. Strengthening the justice system and improving access to justice would be a priority for increasing public confidence in the State's ability to safeguard the human rights of its citizens. In terms of national human rights machinery, it was encouraging to note that the Office of the Provedor for Human Rights and Justice, which has a mandate to protect human rights, strengthen integrity, promote good governance and combat corruption, has expanded its activities following a setback in the areas of human rights and governance during the 2006 crisis. At a meeting with the mission, the Provedor, Sebastião Dias Ximenes, explained that his Office had been active in addressing the humanitarian and security crisis primarily through monitoring internally displaced persons and liaising with Government and other agencies in attempting to protect their rights. However, he pointed out that his Office still had much work to do in explaining its role to the public so that it could be seen as a mechanism available to all those who need it.

18. The Provedor informed the mission that his Office had received 370 complaints from the public since March 2006. The majority of complaints related to allegations of maladministration, followed closely by allegations of human rights violations. By far the largest number of complaints relating to both human rights and maladministration focused on the national police, and he expressed the hope that the Government would invest greater resources in the

training and professional development of the police and in developing mechanisms for accountability. It was encouraging that the Provedor informed the mission that provision was being made in the 2008 budget to expand the activities of the Office by establishing, for the first time, four regional offices. However, the Provedor faces constraints in connection with trained manpower similar to the challenges faced by other State institutions and will continue to need assistance from the international community.

Socio-economic development

19. The mission noted that unemployment, particularly among young people, is very high (40 per cent on average) and that it has become an important cause of violence and unrest. In a statement handed to the mission, non-governmental organizations pointed out that many children and young people had been involved in the ethnic "east and west" conflict and in martial arts groups which had been fighting each other, contributing to civil unrest and causing the collapse of the social structure, especially in Dili. Poverty continues to be a major cause of instability in Timor-Leste; about 40 per cent of the population still lives below the national poverty line, and an annual economic growth rate of 7 per cent is required to reduce poverty significantly. The mission was gratified to note that youth employment has been identified as a priority area by the Government in the international "compact" for Timor-Leste. (The "compact" is a resource-coordination framework designed to facilitate enhanced cooperation among international and national stakeholders in connection with six strategic priority areas.)

20. The mission also noted that Timor-Leste has the financial resources available for its development in the form of its oil and gas resources. It is estimated that oil and gas production in the Timor Sea will have provided $1.9 billion by the end of 2007. The revenues are held in the Petroleum Fund established in 2005. The Fund is expected to increase steadily in the medium term. The current forecast shows the total value of the Fund as $2.9 billion by 2008 and $5.6 billion by 2011. The non-governmental organizations observed in their statement to the mission, however, that the high revenues from the petroleum sector have not affected people's lives so far. While the Government has been praised for the effective management of the Fund, a balance would have to be struck between prudent management of the resources in the Fund for future generations and their utilization to improve the current socio-economic conditions of the people of Timor-Leste, in particular young people.

III. Observations

21. The Government of Timor-Leste and the Timorese people received the mission warmly, and its visit to the country was overwhelmingly perceived as a reaffirmation of support for and readiness to assist Timor-Leste on the part of the United Nations and the international community. All of the Timorese interlocutors with whom the mission met expressed their gratitude for the support of the United Nations for Timor-Leste, and complimented UNMIT on its work. The Timorese leadership and members of the Government, in particular, expressed their full satisfaction with the cooperation received from UNMIT. All Timorese stakeholders also conveyed their strong desire for the United Nations to stay in the country on a long-term basis because of the enormous challenges the country is facing.

22. Having met with the Timorese leadership, parliamentarians, representatives of political parties, civil society, the Church and the diplomatic community and senior officials of UNMIT, the mission is of the view that many of the causes of the 2006 crisis have yet to be addressed. Central to the crisis were issues of governance, the separation of powers and the building of sustainable institutions. The crisis occurred because of divisions in the leadership, weak institutions — especially the security forces — and poor government structures. Furthermore, some of the consequences of the crisis, namely, the issues relating to Reinado, the petitioners and the internally displaced persons have not been resolved. Rebuilding the confidence of the population in the institutions of the State and the security situation, reintegrating internally displaced persons and resolving the inevitable disputes over land and property are all very real challenges facing the nation in 2007 and beyond.

23. Foremost among the mission's concerns is the fact that, despite the successful holding of presidential and parliamentary elections, divergences among the political leaders continue to exist. This has implications for national unity and political stability at a time when national consensus is required to address the grave problems confronting the country, such as those relating to internally displaced persons, security sector reform, economic development, restoring stability, strengthening democratic institutions and improving governance and respect for the rule of law. The mission urges the political leaders of Timor-Leste to work together to tackle those issues in a coordinated way in the national interest. It is clear that there remains a need for continued dialogue and conflict resolution activities at the national and community levels to foster greater political consensus and defuse the existing tensions. The mission encourages UNMIT to continue to exercise its good offices role to expedite efforts for national reconciliation. The mission felt that the reconciliation process should be without prejudice to the need for justice and accountability for criminal acts; to the right of elected officeholders to govern in accordance with the Constitution and laws and with the Government's programme, as approved by the national Parliament; and to the right of the opposition to oppose Government policies using exclusively peaceful and non-violent means.

24. It was clear to the mission that unless the differences among the Timorese leaders are resolved, political uncertainty will persist, and with it the prospect of renewed violence and bloodshed. The Timorese people were most anxious about the precarious security situation, and a better security environment would contribute greatly to the return and reintegration of internally displaced persons. In this regard, it is equally important for the leadership to expeditiously resolve not only issues relating to Reinado and the petitioners, but other issues identified by the Commission of Inquiry, particularly those involving justice and accountability for wrongdoing during the 2006 crisis. The resolution of these issues and the implementation of the Commission's recommendations would also demonstrate that justice is being done and seen to be done, reinforce the primacy of the rule of law in the country and thus counter the perception of impunity. Justice is also necessary to buttress the ongoing efforts for dialogue and national reconciliation.

25. Because of the lack of confidence of the people of Timor-Leste in their security institutions, especially in the police, since the 2006 crisis, they see the continuation of the United Nations police presence as vital for the maintenance of law and order and for the training and institutional development of the police. The mission noted however that there were underlying tensions in the relationship between the UNMIT police and the national police, despite their generally good

cooperation. There appears to be some resentment among the national police as a result of the fact that UNMIT police are undertaking operational duties, while the national police are in a subordinate position and unable to take on such responsibilities because they are still being screened and mentored by UNMIT police, in accordance with the Supplemental Arrangement on Policing signed by UNMIT and the Government. The mission strongly endorses the suggestion of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste that the Secretary-General deploy an expert mission as early as possible to review the working relationship, roles and responsibilities of the UNMIT police and its relationship with the armed forces and the Ministry of Interior, as defined in the Supplemental Arrangement.

26. The mission is of the view that Timor-Leste will continue to need United Nations assistance in a number of areas in the foreseeable future. In the coming year it will be crucial for the new Government, which took office only in August 2007, to consolidate itself and implement its priority programmes to enhance security and improve the lives of the people, for which it will require the support of multilateral and bilateral partners to accomplish its objectives. The mission hopes the Government will consider investing in infrastructure, such as roads, transport, public works, telecommunications and power, with the expectation that that would not only provide employment for young people in Timor-Leste, but also encourage foreign investment and provide a boost for tourism, for which the country has significant potential, if the necessary facilities are constructed. The investment and business climate, and the reintegration of internally displaced persons, would benefit if the Government were to complete the legal infrastructure regarding land in order to extend full property rights. The Government may also wish to consider using the wealth derived from the natural resources of oil and gas for sustainable economic and social development.

27. The mandate of UNMIT, which expires on 26 February 2008, as decided by the Security Council in its resolution 1745 (2007), should be renewed, as it has an important role to play in continuing to assist the Timorese people and leaders in addressing the serious challenges that the young country still faces. While there is an enormous reservoir of international goodwill for Timor-Leste, the mission was concerned that United Nations and international assistance should be seen to be encouraging the strengthening of democratic institutions, the rule of law and self-reliance in Timor-Leste, so as to lessen dependence on international assistance. The mission expressed the view that, while the United Nations can assist, it is not in a position to resolve the fundamental political, social and economic problems of the country. The future of Timor-Leste lies in the hands of its leaders and people, and they must take ownership of its development and demonstrate the political will to help themselves. During the period of the mandate extension, the mission requests the Secretary-General to report on the progress made in key areas to allow the Security Council to assess the extent of support needed from the United Nations in future.

Annex

Terms of reference and composition of the mission

The terms of reference of the mission were as follows:

1. To reaffirm the Security Council's commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Timor-Leste and the promotion of long-term stability in the country.

2. To commend the people of Timor-Leste for their successful elections and efforts aimed at consolidating peace and democracy in their country.

3. To encourage the Government, the Parliament, the political parties and the people of Timor-Leste to continue to work together and engage in political dialogue and consolidate peace, democracy, the rule of law, security sector reform, sustainable social and economic development and national reconciliation in the country.

4. To reaffirm the commitment of the Security Council to assist the Timorese people to consolidate peace, democratic governance and the rule of law, in the post-electoral period in Timor-Leste, to support and encourage efforts to ensure accountability and justice and implementation of United Nations recommendations in that regard, and to stress that the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) set out in Security Council resolution 1745 (2007) constitutes a significant contribution by the United Nations to this endeavour.

5. To express the Security Council's full support for UNMIT and for the United Nations presence in Timor-Leste, and to assess the progress made on the ground in the implementation of the mandate of UNMIT.

6. To discuss and exchange views with the Timorese authorities on ways and means to assist the country in developing capacities necessary to build on security and democratic and other gains achieved thus far.

7. To underscore the long-term commitment of the international community to stabilization and development in Timor-Leste, and the need for continuing support of bilateral and international partners to Timorese efforts towards self-reliance.

The mission was composed of the following members:

Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo (South Africa — Head of Mission)
Ambassador Liu Zhenmin (China)
Mr. Muhammad Anshor (Indonesia)
Ms. Diana Eloeva (Russian Federation)
Ambassador Peter Burian (Slovakia)
Ambassador Jackie Wolcott (United States of America)

United Nations S/2007/712

Security Council

Distr.: General
6 December 2007

Original: English

Twenty-fifth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 14 of resolution 1284 (1999)

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 1284 (1999), in which the Council requested me to report every four months on the compliance by Iraq with its obligations regarding the repatriation or return of all Kuwaiti and third-country nationals or their remains and every six months on the return of all Kuwaiti property, including archives, seized by Iraq.

2. Since June 2006, the frequency of reports on the compliance by Iraq with its obligations regarding the repatriation or return of all Kuwaiti and third-country nationals or their remains has been reduced from every four months to every six months.

3. My twenty-fourth report (S/2007/321) was submitted in May 2007. The present report covers the developments with regard to both issues, the compliance by Iraq with its obligations regarding the repatriation or return of all Kuwaiti and third-country nationals or their remains and the return of all Kuwaiti property, including archives, seized by Iraq.

II. Background

4. Three regional organizations, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, have kept the issues referred to in this report on their agendas. At its 104th session, held on 1 September 2007 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council urged the United Nations to continue its efforts to finalize unresolved issues, in particular with regard to the national archives of the State of Kuwait and the fate of all remaining Kuwaiti and third-country detainees.

5. The Council of the League of Arab States, meeting at the ministerial level on 5 September 2007 in Cairo, condemned both the grave human rights violations that had occurred during the occupation of the State of Kuwait and the destruction of facts relating to Kuwaiti and third-country detainees and missing persons. It expressed deep sympathy to the families of victims whose remains had been identified and concern for the plight of those whose whereabouts remained

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unknown. The Council also called for every effort to be made to ascertain the fate of all Kuwaiti and third-country missing persons.

6. The annual coordination meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held on 2 October 2007 in New York, strongly condemned the killing of Kuwaiti and Iranian prisoners of war and third-country nationals by the former Iraqi regime. The meeting also condemned the concealment of these crimes for over a decade by the former Iraqi regime, which is considered to be a violation of international humanitarian law. It called for bringing to trial the perpetrators of these crimes against humanity.

III. Recent activities with regard to the repatriation and return of all Kuwaiti and third-country nationals or their remains

7. From 19 to 21 November 2007, the High-level Coordinator, Yuli Vorontsov, visited Kuwait, where he had meetings at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as with members of the Kuwaiti National Committee for Missing Persons and Prisoners of War Affairs, representatives of Kuwait Airways Corporation and other officials. His visit to Kuwait took place after the holding of the 55th meeting of the Technical Subcommittee and the 30th meeting of the Tripartite Commission in Kuwait on 11 and 13 November, respectively. Chaired by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), both meetings were attended by representatives of Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

8. Since my last report, the number of Kuwaiti and third-country nationals whose mortal remains have been identified remains unchanged, at 233 (208 Kuwaitis, 1 Egyptian, 2 Lebanese, 3 Iranians, 1 Omani, 6 Saudis and 12 of unknown citizenship). The identifications were based on the human remains brought to Kuwait in 2004. No exhumation activities were conducted by Kuwait in Iraq in 2007. Kuwait is unable to send field missions to Iraq to perform search, assessment and exhumation activities as long as the security situation in Iraq remains dangerous. Efforts to convince Iraqi witnesses to come to Kuwait and provide pertinent information have so far been unsuccessful.

9. The Kuwaiti National Committee informed the High-level Coordinator that while it was not possible to dispatch technical teams to Iraq, preparatory work for such humanitarian missions has continued in accordance with the plan of action adopted at Geneva in November 2006 (see S/2006/948, paras. 10 and 11). As soon as the situation in Iraq stabilizes such missions would resume in coordination with the Iraqi Government and other members of the Tripartite Commission.

10. As part of this preparatory work, Kuwait has been gathering information about burial sites in Iraq that are likely to contain mortal remains of Kuwaiti prisoners of war and third-country nationals. Kuwait looks forward to receiving from the United States of America, as well as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and France, satellite and high altitude imagery allowing it to determine with greater precision the location of mortal remains of Kuwaiti detainees in Iraq and of subsequent exhumation work. It is prepared to provide data which may narrow the area to be scanned and welcomes the arrival of foreign experts to Kuwait, if so

needed. The security situation permitting, it hopes to send a technical team to Iraq in early 2008 to carry out identification procedures at one such site.

11. Kuwait and other members of the Tripartite Commission have taken into consideration the entering into force in Iraq of the new law on the protection of gravesites now placed under supervision of the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights. The Tripartite Commission policy and guidelines for the exhumation and identification of mortal remains, which has been in effect since June 2003, were amended accordingly.

12. In another development, in September 2007, Kuwait returned to Iraq 40 human remains whose analysis produced results insufficient to identify them as belonging to Kuwaiti or third-country missing persons. The human remains were returned with DNA profiles, which should help Iraq to identify its nationals buried in mass graves.

13. Kuwait is prepared to cooperate with Iraq, the United Kingdom and ICRC in order to locate and repatriate 10 Iraqis buried in Kuwait.

14. The case of the missing American serviceman, Captain Michael Scott Speicher, remains open and has been addressed at the meetings of the Tripartite Commission, including the latest one. The United States is resolved to continue searching for him. Kuwait has been using his DNA samples in identification procedures applied to human remains brought to the country.

IV. Recent activities with regard to the return of Kuwaiti property

15. The Kuwaiti national archives have still not been found. The country's officials have repeatedly raised this issue in conversations with the High-level Coordinator. Ambassador Vorontsov has intensified his efforts to ascertain the whereabouts and facilitate the return of the archives. He has been making inquiries in this connection.

16. The issue of the Kuwaiti archives was the main subject of the meeting held between Ambassador Vorontsov and Mr. Gordon Gray, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs of the United States Department of State, on 26 September 2007. In a follow-up to this meeting, on 29 November, Mr. Gray wrote to Ambassador Vorontsov informing him that the United States Government had supported the efforts of the State of Kuwait and the United Nations to recover both official and unofficial Kuwait documents lost during the 1990/91 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Mr. Gray assured Ambassador Vorontsov that his Government would continue to cooperate with the High-level Coordinator and the Government of Kuwait in that regard and would expeditiously return documents discovered during future searches.

17. In a letter dated 2 November, the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations informed the High-level Coordinator that the United States military in Iraq had recovered two boxes of documents belonging to Kuwait. United States officials handed the boxes over to the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 29 October. While in Kuwait, the High-level Coordinator inspected these documents, which are papers, some of a confidential nature, belonging to the Kuwaiti Ministries of Defence, Labour and Information, dating back to the years preceding Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. According to the Kuwaiti side, these documents, while important, do not constitute part of the Kuwaiti national archives.

The latter are the official records of the country belonging to the Amiri Diwan, the offices of the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, the papers received are evidence that Kuwaiti documents were seized by Iraq during its invasion of Kuwait and taken out of the country.

18. On 7 September 2007, the Permanent Representative of Kuwait advised Ambassador Vorontsov that, according to the information received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, the Saudi Arabian authorities had found two original paintings by Picasso and other valuable items that had been seized by Iraq during its invasion of Kuwait. The Permanent Representative of Kuwait requested the High-level Coordinator to facilitate the return of these items to Kuwait.

19. In complying with this request, Ambassador Vorontsov wrote to the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations expressing his readiness to witness the transfer from Saudi Arabia to Kuwait of the mentioned items. He hopes that the Saudi authorities will soon be in a position to carry out the transfer.

V. Observations

20. Kuwait remains resolute in its determination to ensure that all persons unaccounted for or their mortal remains, regardless of their nationality, are repatriated. This essentially humanitarian goal, supported by the Security Council in paragraph 14 of its resolution 1284 (1999), given the serious security challenges in Iraq, is taking more time to achieve than initially expected. The closure of all files, the national objective of Kuwait, should be respected. Putting an end to the prolonged human tragedy will bring a sense of relief to the bereaved families.

21. I am hopeful that the security conditions in Iraq will permit Kuwait to field technical teams and resume search and exhumation activities at Iraqi mass burial sites in 2008, thus expanding the list of those whose remains have been found and identified. I am encouraged that Kuwait continues preparations for the resumption of technical operations in close contact with members of the Tripartite Commission and its Technical Subcommittee chaired by ICRC. The positive stance taken by the Iraqi authorities in this regard is commendable.

22. It is a matter of growing concern that the Kuwaiti national archives have not been found. I support the intensified activities of the High-level Coordinator aimed at determining the fate of the archives. I am grateful to the United States Government for its determination to assist in recovering and transferring to Kuwait its legitimate property.

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Security Council

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6 December 2007

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Letter dated 6 December 2007 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing to express my grave concern with regard to the shortage of critical assets required for the successful deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). As explained by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, in his briefing to the Security Council on 27 November 2007, we have not yet received commitments for 24 helicopters (18 transport and 6 light tactical). Without these assets UNAMID will lack critical mobility and re-supply capacity, which would fundamentally jeopardize its ability to carry out its mandate.

Despite repeated appeals to Member States by the Secretariat over the past months and my personal intervention with a considerable number of leaders, including on the margins of the meeting held in Annapolis, no Member State has come forward to provide these vital assets.

We have considered other options, including the possibility of outsourcing the transport helicopters to civilian contractors and determined that, given the non-permissive security environment in Darfur, a civilian contractor would not be able to transport troops who would be required to respond to emergency security situations.

As an eleventh-hour effort I am sending a high-level team to the forthcoming European Union-Africa Summit in Lisbon to directly engage with as many key leaders as possible on this subject. The team will also hold discussions with Sudanese officials in an effort to resolve the issue of UNAMID troop composition.

I write at this critical moment because of my faith in the collective commitment of the Security Council to see its mandated operation succeed. With only three weeks left before the transfer of authority from the African Union Mission in Sudan to UNAMID, the situation has become acute. While helicopters alone cannot ensure the success of the mission, their absence may well doom it to failure. I hope that Council members will be able to exercise their influence so as to transform international concern for the situation in Darfur into the tangible provision of the 24 helicopters, which could make such a critical difference to the people of Darfur.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon

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Security Council

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10 December 2007
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Letter dated 6 December 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to inform you of the following:

In a fresh violation of the ceasefire accords and yet another move designed to derail the current negotiation process, the "Frente POLISARIO", with support from Algeria, is preparing to hold its so-called 12th congress from 14 to 18 December in Tifariti, right in the heart of the buffer strip.

This constitutes a serious and blatant violation of the ceasefire agreements concluded in 1991, since the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) is supposed to ensure that the area east of the berm from which the Royal Armed Forces voluntarily withdrew in order to strengthen the ceasefire and avert any new clashes, including with the Algerian Army, is free from any military presence or civilian facilities.

The transportation of hundreds of persons living in Algerian territory, supervised by soldiers dressed as civilians constitute, as you yourself have pointed out, a breach of military agreement No. 1 (S/2005/254) and contribute "to increased tensions on the ground and may result in a deterioration of the situation ..." (S/2005/648).

In this connection, the Kingdom of Morocco wishes to recall the terms and conditions under which the ceasefire was declared on 6 September 1991. It should like in particular to refer to the letter on this subject dated 3 September 1991 from His Majesty, the late King Hassan II, addressed to the former Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar.

Morocco wishes to reaffirm its determination to preserve its rights over the entire territory and rejects any attempts to establish facts on the ground and change the status of the buffer strip. All the activities conducted in the buffer strip are completely illegal, as those carrying them out are acting without authority.

Moreover, the transportation of hundreds of "refugees" from the Tindouf camps is a violation of international humanitarian law and yet another infringement of their right to preserve their dignity and to be protected from being manipulated or exploited for political propaganda.

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The parties organizing or supporting this sham congress in a dangerous area are putting at risk the lives of these "refugees", who are already in an odd situation, in that they have never been identified or registered as such and are deprived of their fundamental rights to freedom of movement and expression.

These parties are also directly responsible for the diversion of humanitarian assistance provided by the international community to an operation that is pure propaganda.

Furthermore, this demonstration is clearly of a piece with similar activities of other parties designed to adversely affect the positive momentum generated by the Moroccan autonomy initiative and endorsed by Security Council resolutions 1754 (2007) and 1783 (2007) and the draft resolution adopted by the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly on 15 October 2007 (A/62/412, para. 24, draft resolution I).

Finally, it poses a challenge to the Security Council, which in paragraph 2 of resolution 1783 (2007), called on the parties to create an atmosphere propitious for dialogue and for the success of negotiations. These other parties bear responsibility for any deterioration in the situation resulting from their actions.

For all these reasons, the Kingdom of Morocco should be grateful if you would take such measures as you might deem necessary to deal with these dangerous and provocative actions that threaten peace and stability in the region and are incompatible with the climate of trust and calm that must prevail at this crucial point in the search for a negotiated political solution to this regional dispute.

I should be grateful if you would bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council and have it circulated as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) El Mostafa **Sahel**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2007/715

Security Council

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6 December 2007

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 1233 (1999), by which the Council requested me to keep it regularly informed and to submit a report on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country (UNOGBIS). Subsequently, in paragraph 11 of Security Council resolution 1580 (2004), the Council requested me to submit a written report to it every three months.

2. The present report focuses on developments since my previous report, dated 28 September 2007 (S/2007/576).

II. Political developments

3. The demands for the replacement of the Minister of the Interior and the Minister for Finance by appointees from the Social Renewal Party (PRS) dominated political attention for much of the period under review. The period was also marked by rising social tensions, which coincided with a long parliamentary recess. There was an increasing feeling of social malaise and reinforced perceptions that State institutions were adrift. Despite a well-orchestrated campaign by his supporters, Baciro Dabó was dismissed as Minister of the Interior by presidential decree on 16 October. He was replaced by a member of PRS, Certório Biote, thus resolving the last major outstanding issue that had hampered the effective implementation of the political stability pact signed in April by the country's three main political parties represented in the National Assembly — the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), PRS and the United Social Democratic Party (PUSD). The dismissal was preceded by reports of growing tensions between the Minister and the Chief of Staff of the armed forces, amid allegations of military support for the PRS position. The reports were denied by a military spokesman on 16 October and by the Chief of Staff himself.

4. The decision of the President reinforced widespread unease over what was perceived as military pressure and interference in politics. Since September, civil

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society organizations had, on various occasions, voiced concerns to my Representative over growing military protagonism in the political arena, especially after the usual practice of assigning police to protect members of the Government was changed and the police guards of the Prime Minister were replaced by military guards on 14 September. The human rights non-governmental organization Liga Guineense dos Direitos Humanos wrote to my Representative on 30 October, drawing attention to concerns of Mr. Dabó's family over alleged threats to his life. Liga Guineense dos Direitos Humanos also warned of threats to democracy posed by "constant interventions of hidden forces", which it said were subverting constitutional norms and practices in the country. The new Minister of the Interior subsequently met the President of Liga Guineense dos Direitos Humanos and assured him of the safety of Mr. Dabó.

5. Meanwhile, the first ordinary session of the 2007/8 parliamentary year commenced on 19 November 2007, and is scheduled to end on 19 December 2007. The draft agenda includes consideration of the Government programme and budget, as well as an amnesty bill for those who were involved in military interventions from November 1980 to 6 October 2004. In his opening speech, President Vieira reiterated his call for the holding of local government elections, saying that democracy in Guinea-Bissau would not be complete without them. He also urged the National Assembly to give priority to the debate on amnesty. The Speaker, Francisco Benante, stressed that an amnesty law should not violate international law and should take into consideration the recommendations in Security Council resolution 1580 (2004), in which the Council called upon the Government and national authorities to consider the issues of justice and impunity when addressing the issue of granting amnesty. He also warned that any future element or group seeking to subvert constitutional order through force would not be granted amnesty, and recommended that the institutions of the State resort to subregional and other international assistance if the country's forces were unable to respect constitutional order. On 28 November, Parliament unanimously approved the State budget for 2007, with 81 votes in favour. This followed the approval by Parliament of the Government programme on 23 November.

6. The Government and the three parties signatory to the stability pact — PAIGC, PRS and PUSD — held several meetings before the start of the parliamentary session to harmonize positions and to iron out differences that might jeopardize the survival of the Government. In that regard, the Government and parliamentarians of the signatory parties met on 1 and 2 November to discuss issues related to political and government stability. The party leaders stressed that long-lasting solutions to the problems facing Guinea-Bissau could be achieved only through consensus.

7. In response to a request by the Government of Guinea-Bissau for United Nations assistance in organizing the legislative elections scheduled for 2008, a United Nations electoral assistance mission was dispatched to Bissau from 26 September to 4 October to carry out a needs assessment. The mission recommended a positive response to the request and to the setting up of a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) electoral support project for the country. The recommendations also included updating the proposed electoral budget and calendar in line with existing legislation, developing national capacity for planning electoral operations, creating a donor coordination mechanism and providing support for the National Electoral Commission civic and voter education campaigns. A UNDP technical mission subsequently visited Bissau from 5 to 13 October to

draw up a project document for electoral assistance. The main difficulties in finalizing the technical details are related to the consolidation and harmonization of the budgets of the various entities involved in the organization of the elections, and arriving at a political consensus on the date of the election and voter registration.

8. The Estados Gerais dialogue initiative, with financial support from UNOGBIS, organized a total of 15 meetings during October and November in the capital, centre, north and south of the country. The meetings were attended by citizens from a wide spectrum of society to identify the main causes of instability and find national solutions to critical issues. The Estados Gerais steering committee is also planning to convene a national meeting of traditional leaders by the end of this year. That meeting will serve to broaden the level of national participation in this all-inclusive dialogue initiative and to help galvanize the widest possible interest in the process.

9. The participative dialogue programme led by the National Institute for Studies and Research and Interpeace — Voz di Paz/Voice of Peace — continued to consolidate its 12 regional platforms for dialogue in all the regions of the country, through needs assessments and participatory planning. The dialogue platforms are rooted in existing economic associations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community radios, and are open to assisting other conflict resolution initiatives. An intense phase of participative research on the root causes of conflict, based on grass-roots consultations in 38 constituencies, will start towards the end of 2007.

10. Under the capacity-building programme for Parliament funded by the United Nations Democracy Fund and coordinated by UNDP, the Netherlands Development Organization and UNOGBIS organized training sessions for 11 parliamentarians, including four women, and one permanent staff of the National Assembly, in conflict transformation skills from 25 to 28 September and for 15 parliamentarians, including four women, in leadership skills from 12 to 16 November. A subregional conference was hosted by the National Assembly on 25 and 26 October for women parliamentarians and civil society leaders from Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal on the consequences of conflict in the border areas with Senegal. The conference was attended by 45 women from the national assemblies and NGOs from those countries. The conference was funded under the United Nations Democracy Fund programme and organized with technical assistance of the Netherlands Development Organization and UNOGBIS.

III. Economic and social aspects

11. During the period under review, the economic and social situation in Guinea-Bissau remained stable but fragile. On 17 September, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) concluded article IV consultations with Guinea-Bissau. The Board welcomed the Government's emergency fiscal programme as a promising start to restoring fiscal stability and transparency, and encouraged the authorities to reach an early agreement on emergency post-conflict assistance. The Board observed that Guinea-Bissau was severely debt-distressed and would remain reliant on the support of donors over the medium term in order to reduce its outstanding domestic debt burden and to achieve its economic and social objectives. The Board recommended that any new financial assistance should be on highly concessional terms, preferably grants, so as not to add to the debt burden. A mission

from IMF visited Bissau from 6 to 19 November within the framework of emergency post-conflict assistance. The mission noted improved fiscal performance in relation to the first half of the year and also observed that information and data flows had improved. However, it stressed that there was still much work to be done. The mission announced that in the light of positive developments, IMF would be in a position to enter into an agreement on emergency post-conflict assistance from January to December 2008. Consequently, $5.6 million would be available under emergency post-conflict assistance and disbursed in two six-month tranches. However, the mission indicated that the financing gap for 2008 remained significant and, based on current estimates, stood at approximately 24 billion CFA francs (approximately €36 million). The head of the IMF mission stressed that Guinea-Bissau would continue to need substantial assistance from the international community. She also expressed confidence that the fiscal programme of the Government presented positive prospects and that its economic team had the competence and capacity to implement emergency post-conflict assistance.

12. A World Bank mission also visited Bissau from 16 to 23 November to hold discussions on the state of public finances with the Government and the IMF team and to boost cooperation efforts, including preparations for a social emergency programme. The World Bank will be providing $6 million, to be disbursed in January and February 2008, to assist in clearing salary arrears and $10 million for budgetary support. The Government is on schedule in its debt repayments to the African Development Bank, following the scheduled repayment of $88,147 due in October.

13. Social tensions are mounting over unpaid salary arrears and rising prices of basic food items. While the Government is up to date with civil service salaries for the period April to October 2007, it has not paid the salary arrears for February and March, which it inherited from the previous Government. However, Minister for Finance Issufo Sanhá indicated that the arrears would be cleared by December. There was a rice shortage that caused retail prices to go up by some 35 per cent. Given the high rate of absolute poverty in the country, such shortages and price hikes have significant social and economic impacts. The Government, trade unions and economic operators met within the framework of the permanent social arbitration council (Conselho Permanente para a Concertação Social) in November to find ways of reducing the impact of the price increases. At the same time, there has been a wave of strikes by teachers and health workers since November over the non-payment of salary arrears and other contractual issues. The General Confederation of Independent Trade Unions warned the Government on 29 October that its grace period was over, while the National Union of Guinean Workers advocated dialogue. Talks between the teachers and health workers unions and the Government, under the aegis of the Permanent Social Arbitration Council in mid-November, were inconclusive, and the unions served notice of further strike action. The General Confederation of Independent Trade Unions also warned that Government proposals on promotions in the armed forces were unaffordable and would not be tolerated, especially since the civil service had not received pay increases for several years.

14. The production of rice and other cereals was affected by late and inadequate rains. According to a joint mission in October by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, the 2007/8 cereal crop yields were 9 per cent below

the 2006/7 yields. It concluded that there would be a substantial cereal deficit and that the country would have to import over 85,000 tons of cereal, the equivalent of one third of overall cereal consumption.

15. In early October, an outbreak of cholera was identified in the southern region of Tombali; 109 cases and three deaths were reported by 8 November. The epidemic has been limited so far to villages along the southern coast, in part due to the rapid response of the Government and local authorities, with the support of the United Nations. Meanwhile, the national health sector development plan for the period 2008-2012 is nearing completion. It outlines strategies and priorities in line with the country's poverty reduction strategy plan. In October, the Government adopted a national plan to combat HIV/AIDS. The prevention of mother-to-child HIV/AIDS transmission remains a concern, as there is no funding for the only actor in the field, the NGO Céu na Terra, to continue its activities. The United Nations is assisting the Government to establish a new national plan in this area and is providing training to staff at national health centres so that they may incorporate these services in health centres.

16. The United Nations Population Fund and UNDP are supporting the Government to conduct a population census. The last census was carried out in 1991. The door-to-door census is scheduled to take place in March 2008, but $2 million is required to finalize the operation.

17. Prime Minister Cabi has reiterated to my Representative the Government's request for Guinea-Bissau to be included on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission and to receive assistance from the Peacebuilding Fund, stressing that those measures are crucial for socio-economic revitalization and strengthening of political stability in the country. On 16 November, the Prime Minister emphasized to my Representative that the Government had demonstrated its political will to combat drug trafficking through its emergency plan of action and that, if placed on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, Guinea-Bissau would focus on quick impact projects in public health, education and the provision of other basic services. The Government, he added, would also undertake medium to long-term support for economic governance and security sector reform and carry out resource mobilization through concerted efforts to implement sustainable post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding.

IV. Military and security aspects

18. Under its programme of assistance for security sector reform, UNDP has agreed to finance an independent census of active personnel in the armed forces. A reliable census is seen as essential for planning and attracting donor support for security sector reform, as decisions on the needs and numbers of the members of the armed forces to be targeted for demobilization cannot be taken without census data. The terms of reference for the conduct of the census have been drafted in consultation with the national authorities and key partners. Work on the census is planned to start in January 2008. A joint advisory mission of the European Council and European Commission visited Bissau from 8 to 12 October to conduct a needs assessment to support the security sector reform within the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy. The European Commission representative announced that the European Commission had earmarked €8 million for security

sector reform for the period 2008-2013. The European Commission is sending four military specialists to work with Guinea-Bissau's Security Sector Reform Technical Coordinating Committee.

19. On 12 November, my Representative convened a meeting of the international partners group in Bissau, to review the final draft of an anti-narcotics programme document, including a costing plan. The costing plan covered the national emergency plan of action against drug trafficking, unveiled by the Government in August as part of the overall security sector reform programme. This costing plan will be part of the working documents for the Lisbon international conference on drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, which is being organized by the Governments of Guinea-Bissau and Portugal, to be held on 19 December 2007. The costing plan, which was developed by the Government with technical support from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, is built around three clusters: investigative and enforcing capacities; judicial prosecution and the administration of justice; and execution of sentences and prison reform. The anti-narcotics programme, costed at $19.1 million with $301,900 already available, will be implemented in complementary phases: a quick impact phase in 2008, and a stabilization and security sector reform integration phase from 2009 to 2010. It also provides for enhanced physical protection of state officials most likely to be exposed to threats or reprisals by drug traffickers. The Lisbon conference and the response of the international community will be essential if the Government's stated commitment to combating transnational organized criminal networks in Guinea-Bissau is to succeed. In addition to the four technical missions it fielded in October, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime posted a senior anti-organized-crime consultant and a senior legal assistance regional adviser to Bissau in November. They will be replaced in the near future by two officers of the Office to be recruited through projects to be financed by UNDP. The Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Antonio Maria Costa, visited Guinea-Bissau on 27 November for discussions with national authorities and partners regarding the efforts to combat drug trafficking and organized crime. In addition to hosting and organizing the Lisbon conference, the Government of Portugal posted experts in Bissau on a temporary basis to provide legal, investigative and penitentiary administration advice to the Ministry of Justice and Judicial Police.

20. UNOGBIS held a workshop on 23 and 25 October on peacekeeping operations for 27 officers of the armed forces, within the context of preparations for a unit to join the standby peacekeeping force of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). UNOGBIS also held training workshops for 130 military personnel in Cumere from 20 to 22 November, within the framework of preparations to send an infantry company to Senegal in December to take part in regional peacekeeping exercises. UNOGBIS will also be providing the armed forces with documents for a training-of-trainers programme. The National Commission against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons was sworn in by the Government on 3 October.

21. UNOGBIS also trained 50 police officers on code of conduct, use of force and firearms, and ethics from 22 to 26 October. The training was organized in collaboration with the Inspector-General of Police, General Bitchofula Na Fafe. On 7 and 8 November, 30 members of the Judiciary Police were offered training on various aspects of criminal investigation. Many of the officers said they had not undergone any training for several years, highlighting the need for the establishment

of a police academy and for capacity-building. In that regard, UNOGBIS has initiated discussions with the Rule of Law Assistance Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations regarding a possible needs assessment mission to Guinea-Bissau to assess possibilities for capacity-building for the police. UNOGBIS also provided training on community policing to 130 police officers on 22, 27 and 28 November.

22. In September and October, the national Mine Action Coordination Centre, supported by UNDP, continued to focus its demining efforts on areas in and around the capital and the northern border area. In September and October, the national mine action NGO, Lutamos Todos Contra as Minas, in partnership with the international NGO Cleared Ground Demining and the national NGO HUMAID, cleared 128,367 m^2 of landmines and destroyed 1,829 pieces of unexploded ordnance, 8 anti-personnel mines and 14 anti-tank mines.

V. Human rights aspects

23. UNOGBIS organized a seminar from 20 to 22 November on the theme "The challenges faced by Guinea-Bissau's journalists and media". Among the topics discussed were drug trafficking, stability and the 2008 elections. The seminar was attended by 46 journalists, including 15 women. A seminar held from 27 to 29 November focused on the role of community radios.

24. UNOGBIS continued to monitor the situation of the three persons who, in connection with the fighting in March 2006 on the northern border with the Casamance region in Senegal, were sentenced by a military court in April to two to five years of imprisonment for treason and collaboration with the enemy. The military high court overturned an appeal by two of the detainees on 16 October. The three detainees currently remain in detention.

25. UNOGBIS, in partnership with the Institute for Women and Children (Instituto de Mulher e Crança) and with technical support from the United Nations Children's Fund, organized a workshop on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in Gabú on 5 and 6 November. The workshop was attended by 47 participants from local organizations and institutions and by traditional chiefs. Two more workshops will be organized in other parts of the country in December. The aim of the workshops is to raise awareness about the Convention and its Protocol, and to collect inputs to be included in the Guinea-Bissau national report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women that is due by March 2008.

VI. Observations and recommendations

26. Despite its limited resource base and capacity, the Government of Guinea-Bissau has made significant strides in tackling the major challenges of fighting against drug trafficking, preparing for legislative elections, pursuing national reconciliation, restoring the credibility of the country externally, and promoting cooperation with international financial institutions. I especially commend the significant progress made by the authorities in promoting the country's emergency fiscal programme. The soon-to-be-signed emergency post-conflict assistance

agreement with IMF attests to the Government's success in its objective to re-establish its credibility with international financial institutions. Continuity is critical if the authorities are to build on these positive developments. Political stability is also needed to pursue national reconciliation and ensure a social environment conducive to peaceful and credible elections next year. The approval by Parliament of the Government's programme constitutes a strong endorsement of the work carried out by Prime Minister Cabi's Government since it came to power in April. I urge all national stakeholders to continue with this positive attitude of consensus-building so that the Government may focus on addressing the major socio-economic needs of Bissau Guineans.

27. Besides being a priority of the Government, the legislative elections in 2008 will be a key benchmark of the state of democracy in Guinea-Bissau. I therefore urge all stakeholders to reach agreement on a date for the elections so that work may begin on resource mobilization. I also appeal to the country's international partners to support this important exercise of democracy.

28. With regard to the urgency of combating drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, I am pleased to note that since my last report, in which I called for action and international assistance, and the recommendation for action also made by the Security Council in its presidential statement of 19 October (S/PRST/2007/38), considerable progress has been made by the Government, in close cooperation with its bilateral and multilateral partners, towards developing a robust anti-narcotics trafficking programme. I appeal once again to the partners of Guinea-Bissau to actively and generously support the Lisbon conference as part of the broader strategy towards enabling Guinea-Bissau to mobilize resources to tackle the growing threat of drug trafficking. In this regard, I have instructed my Representative to continue providing support for the Lisbon conference and to facilitate linkages to the ECOWAS-led regional conference to be organized in 2008.

29. Drug trafficking cannot be seen as an isolated challenge, for it flourishes in an environment of institutional weaknesses and widespread poverty. Efforts to tackle drug trafficking will be in vain if social and economic development is neglected and if the welfare of the general population continues to decline, shifting from frustration to desperation. In this setting, I wish to highlight the observation of IMF that Guinea-Bissau will continue to need assistance in the medium term, if it is to achieve its economic and social objectives and ensure basic and minimum living standards for Bissau Guineans. The realization of these objectives is essential for the consolidation of peace and the building of a State based on the rule of law.

30. In my previous report of September 2007, I indicated my intention to submit proposals on how best the United Nations could continue to provide effective assistance for national efforts towards sustainable stabilization in Guinea-Bissau. During consultations held by a Secretariat assessment mission to Guinea-Bissau in August and September 2007, national political actors and international partners stressed that, in light of continuing and emerging challenges in the country, a United Nations political presence remained vital in order to help consolidate stabilization efforts and assist in preventing a reversal of the achievements made. In light of the above, I have recommended to the Security Council that, upon the expiration of the current mandate of UNOGBIS on 31 December 2007, its mandate be extended to 31 December 2008, to allow the Office to continue assisting Guinea-Bissau as it confronts the challenges of peacebuilding. The proposed extension would allow

UNOGBIS to strengthen efforts towards security sector reform, facilitate efforts to combat drug trafficking and organized crime, undertake mediation and good offices functions aimed at promoting dialogue and national reconciliation, and promote respect for the rule of law and for human rights.

31. I should like to conclude by commending the staff of UNOGBIS, under the leadership of my Representative, Shola Omoregie, as well as the personnel of the entire United Nations country team, for the important work they continue to carry out in Guinea-Bissau, often under challenging circumstances.